United Nations E/2001/88

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
18 June 2001

Original: English

Substantive session of 2001
Geneva, 2-27 July 2001
Item 14 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Social and human rights questions: advancement of women

Report of the Board of Trustees of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women on its twenty-first session

I. Matters brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council

1. The United Nations should take the necessary measures to ensure the continuity of the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), by motivating Member States to contribute to its sustainability, taking into consideration the fact that phases I and II of the Gender Awareness Information and Networking System (GAINS) have been completed, phase III has been initiated, and that already 50 per cent of the projected funds have been invested.

2. The Board recommends that a new Director for the Institute should be appointed as soon as possible, even on an interim basis, considering the critical current situation of the Institute and, as stipulated in article IV, paragraph 1, of the Statute of INSTRAW, the Board should be consulted on the appointment. The Board also recommends that, if funds allow, the new Director should assume functions while the current Director is still at the Institute in order to facilitate a smooth transition. The Board recommends that the profile of the new Director should include, as a priority, fund-raising capacity. In addition, the profile should include the following: knowledge of the United Nations system; proven expertise in performing at the international level; high managerial skill; administrative experience, knowledge of gender issues, and proficiency in English and Spanish and, if possible, French.

3. The Board reiterates its recommendation for an audit of the INSTRAW Trust Fund and expresses its regret that a comprehensive report of the most recent audit was not made available before the closing of discussions of the session of the Board.

* E/2001/100.

01-41803 (E) 170701

4. The Board takes note of the progress report on the activities of INSTRAW for 2000.

5. The Board takes note and approves of the proposed strategic focus, work plan and budgetary requirements for the year 2001. It acknowledges the relevance of the GAINS methodology and recognizes the need to secure the financial sustainability of INSTRAW beyond 2001 in order to fully implement the methodology. The Board recommends that Governments support the revitalization process of INSTRAW, reaffirming their will to support GAINS as the working methodology of the Institute.

6. The Board requests the Economic and Social Council to recommend to the General Assembly the transfer of any funds remaining of the US$ 800,000 supplement provided by the United Nations for 2001 as a reserve for the year 2002.

7. The Board recommends that, if insufficient funds are received for the core operations of INSTRAW for the year 2002, the Institute's operations for that year should be adjusted to the levels of funds available, in consultation with the Board.

8. The Board proposes that, in the event of downsizing of the Institute's staff, the separating staff be adequately compensated, as was the case in previous years (in particular 1998-1999).

9. In order to support the fund-raising efforts of the Institute, the Board reiterates the need for taking a proactive role in ensuring Governments' contributions to the Trust Fund and promoting cost-sharing initiatives between the Institute and other organizations.

10. The Board recommends the immediate implementation of the Institute's fund-raising strategy, which may require the engagement of fund-raising expertise.

11. The Board recommends that article V of the Statute of INSTRAW be amended with regard to the approval of focal points. In order to make the approval process more efficient, the Board recommends that focal points be approved by INSTRAW instead of the Board.

II. Progress report on the activities of INSTRAW for 2000

12. Under agenda item 4, the Board reviewed document INSTRAW/BT/2001/R.2 on the activities of INSTRAW for 2000. The report outlines the efforts and progress made during the period 1 April 2000–31 March 2001 for the revitalization of INSTRAW through the implementation of GAINS and highlights the actions taken to arrest the financial crisis, restructure the Institute and expand and increase its financial base.

13. The Director explained in detail the uncertainties confronted by INSTRAW during the year 2000 and the efforts made by the secretariat and INSTRAW management to ensure that the Institute continued its operations into 2001. She noted that in December 2000 INSTRAW faced closure due to lack of sufficient funds and that thanks to a supplement of $800,000 from the United Nations regular budget, approved by the General Assembly, it was able to secure its operations during the year 2001.

14. The Director further reported on the activities undertaken during the period under review, namely:

(a) Fund-raising activities, including direct communication with Governments, preparation of a portfolio of GAINS special project proposals, submission of the GAINS project for funding to the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIP), submissions to the European Union and to the Development Account of the United Nations etc. She noted that the two proposals submitted to UNFIP had not been approved, and that the proposal to the Development Account was still outstanding;

(b) Fund-raising and publicity strategy for INSTRAW, prepared by a private firm;

(c) Special missions to Italy, Spain and Brussels;

(d) Design of a strategic and programmatic approach for the years 2001 and beyond;

(e) Recruitment of a number of international consultants for GAINS;

(f) Implementation of GAINS.

15. With regard to the implementation of GAINS, the Director noted that phases I and II of GAINS had been completed and that a prototype of GAINS was presented at the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, "Women 2000", and at the information technology exhibit organized parallel to the high-level segment of the Council. She further noted that the GAINS platform of networks had expanded significantly during the period, totalling 99 national focal points, 27 regional nodes, 93 individual scholars and institutions in the research network, and 31 individuals and institutions in the training network.

16. The Director also reported on the progress made in the development of the GAINS global database, containing — as of May 2001 — over 1,500 entries of relevant gender-related resources such as documents, organizations, web sites, events, projects, training materials, and experts. She concluded by noting the participation of INSTRAW in two collaborative projects, one with the Mediterranean Women's Studies Center (KEGME), on "Building bridges: good neighbourliness, democracy and human rights" in the Balkan region, and another with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), which involved a panel on "Racism, class and masculinities: the global dimensions of gender-based violence", held during the forty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women. Through GAINS, INSTRAW maintained communications with focal points, provided them with news and information, and involved them in specific activities. One such activity was the digital art contest in which focal points submitted art works commemorating International Women's Day, on the topic of "Women and peace". The winning work was featured on INSTRAW's electronic card sent out on that day and was exhibited, along with a selection of other submissions, in the GAINS digital art gallery on the web site and at the session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

17. On administrative and support services, the Director reported that during the period under review, the Institute operated with a small professional team, consisting of the Director, one P-3 and one P-2, and an Associate Expert assigned to INSTRAW until the end of January 2001. In addition to the professional staff, the

Institute also had five staff members at the General Service level. The process of advertising and recruiting long-term consultants was possible only in the last months of the year, when contributions came in. It was only after the approval of the supplement from the regular budget that the Institute was able to go ahead with the recruitment of qualified consultants, including the GAINS Systems Administrator (November 2000), the GAINS Research Coordinator (January 2001), the Network Coordinator (April 2001) and GAINS Manager (May 2001).

18. Board members commended the progress made in the implementation of GAINS and expressed satisfaction that consultants had been recruited to expand GAINS and put it into full operation. They further highlighted the importance of ensuring the continuation of INSTRAW beyond 2001 and agreed on the importance of directing the Institute's efforts towards the full implementation of GAINS. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General to INSTRAW also supported this by noting that in 2003 there would be a major conference on telecommunications, organized by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), and that INSTRAW could provide input to the conference. The Board also noted that the Director should continue to increase INSTRAW's visibility through GAINS and to fund-raise to secure additional resources through direct communication with Governments, specially those familiar with the work of INSTRAW and GAINS.

19. With regard to the low level of pledges to INSTRAW at the United Nations Pledging Conference, a Board member noted that many Governments had decided not to make any pledges at the pledging conferences, and therefore the low level of pledges to INSTRAW should not be taken as an indication of their lack of support for it. In line with this observation, the Director noted that usually Governments contribute without pledging. Thus, pledges cannot be used as a tool for planning and budgeting. In effect, the Institute has no way of knowing what contributions will be coming in during any given year. During 2000 most of the major contributions of donor Governments did not come in until the last quarter of the year, a situation that seriously affected the timely and systematic implementation of GAINS.

20. In response to clarifications requested by one Board member regarding efforts made by the secretariat to persuade donors to contribute adequate funds to INSTRAW, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General noted that, as various reports have indicated, the Director and the secretariat have done everything possible in that regard. The approval of a supplement from the regular budget of the United Nations is an illustration of the efforts made by all concerned.

21. The representative of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) commended the report and stated that, through GAINS, INSTRAW had been able to find a niche in the international gender community. She further noted that, considering its financial constraints, INSTRAW had been able to mobilize a great deal of energy and support. She also stressed that if INSTRAW were to play an important role in facilitating the entrance of women into the information society, it would need to translate the INSTRAW web site into different languages. She noted that the regional commissions would like to engage more in GAINS.

22. In response to a comment made by the representative of ECLAC, the INSTRAW Director noted that one of the Institute's new strategic areas was "Women and men in the information society", responding proactively to the current glaring gender gap in information and communication technology (ICT) worldwide.

She further noted that the programme "Closing the digital divide between women and men" included a project for developing a global strategy for gender mainstreaming into ICTs and a training project for INSTRAW focal points in the Caribbean on mainstreaming gender through the use of ICTs.

23. The Director agreed with the representative of ECLAC regarding the need to make GAINS available in different languages. She informed the Board of efforts made through the permanent missions to the United Nations in New York to get funds for Russian and Chinese versions. She also mentioned unsuccessful efforts to secure, through the International Francophonie Association, a French- and Arabic-speaking Associate Expert for the expansion of GAINS in those language communities and its translation into those languages. She noted that GAINS was available in English and that the Spanish web site was being refurbished and would be accessible soon. It would include a global database of gender resources in both languages, and the GAINS community of networks (i.e., focal points, researchers, trainers and ICT specialists). The Director further informed the Board that INSTRAW was seeking the collaboration of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in order to translate the web site into Arabic and asked the Board to propose ways of pushing those initiatives forward. One Board member noted that the Centre of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR) could participate in the expansion of GAINS into the Arabic-speaking region.

24. In response to one Board member's query regarding the GAINS networks, an INSTRAW staff member noted that the INSTRAW web site provided a list of all the GAINS networks, disaggregated by region and country. The list was updated periodically, normally on a monthly basis. She explained that new focal points were approved by the Board Bureau. Given the rapid expansion of the network of focal points and the need to expedite the process of approval of new members, she asked the Board to consider amending the statute so that INSTRAW, rather than the Board Bureau, could approve new focal points. She also appealed to the Board to assist INSTRAW in identifying relevant organizations in their regions and countries to form part of the current networks.

III. INSTRAW's proposed strategic focus, work plan and budgetary requirements, 2001

25. Under agenda item 5, the Board had before it document INSTRAW/BT/2001/R.3, entitled "INSTRAW's proposed strategic focus, work plan and budgetary requirements, 2001". The document outlines the Institute's strategic focus, based on four strategic objectives:

(a) Development and implementation of a fund-raising strategy;

(b) Continuation of the expansion of GAINS functionality, including populating its database and its global community of focal points and research and training networks;

(c) Identification of critical areas of concern and proposed new INSTRAW strategic focus and programmes;

(d) Promotion of women's empowerment and gender equality by providing training and capacity-building to women's organizations in ICTs and the GAINS system.

The Board also had before it INSTRAW/BT/2001/CRP.1, entitled "INSTRAW budgetary performance report, 2001" which presents the expenditures for the period 1 January–30 April 2001.

26. The document on strategic focus outlines each of the objectives proposed, particularly the future activities aiming at the expansion of GAINS functionality and development of research, training and information dissemination projects within the agreed strategic areas. In order to provide Board members with more detailed information about the immediate plans for the further development of GAINS, the Director presented a reference document, entitled "GAINS in action", for their consideration. It points out that in the immediate future, INSTRAW will concentrate on the following: expansion of the GAINS platform of networks and different language audiences; piloting and testing GAINS collaborative research and training methodologies and a methodology for monitoring and evaluation; and further fine-tuning and expansion of the technological infrastructure of GAINS. These objectives, however, are closely linked to the implementation of specific research, training and information dissemination projects developed within the three strategic areas of work of INSTRAW — namely, building partnerships between men and women for gender equality; women and men in information society; and the gendered impact of globalization on development and peace. A special project portfolio has been prepared so that interested Governments can earmark their contributions.

27. The Director of INSTRAW explained that, due to the specific situation of INSTRAW, fund-raising objectives and substantive objectives were presented in a single document, so as to reflect the larger institution-building strategy of the Institute.

28. Following that clarification, many Board members agreed with the proposed approach and approved the way the document has been structured. One Board member, while supporting the document, strongly reiterated the need for ensuring institutional and financial security for INSTRAW if it is to implement its substantive strategic objectives. Hence, she expressed agreement with the idea that a proposal should be made to the Council requesting it to recommend to the General Assembly the transfer of any unspent money of the supplement for the year 2001 to the year 2002. She mentioned the contribution of the previous year by the Government of Spain, for which the Director and other Board members reiterated INSTRAW's gratitude as well as their hope for Spain's continued support.

29. The Director stated that INSTRAW needed to address three parallel fronts: strategic focus, programmes and outputs; reaffirmation of its political mandate and support by member States; and search for adequate financial resources to sustain it. Other Board members supported the strategy, which involved actions in the three parallel fronts and reiterated their approval of the suggestions made by the Director that the Board must be more active in achieving the goals of INSTRAW.

30. Other Board members, as well as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to INSTRAW, supported the comment that the Board should play an important role in ensuring the Institute's sustainability, be it in fund-raising with

their Governments or by representing INSTRAW at regional and national meetings, thereby contributing to the Institute's visibility and publicity.

31. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General to INSTRAW also agreed that it was crucial to deliberate on the future directions for INSTRAW in view of its current financial situation. She made a special reference to the statement by the Director regarding the issue of the resources. She stated that the Board had to consider a few important questions: What should be its decision regarding the future of INSTRAW if INSTRAW did not receive any contributions in 2001 to take it into 2002 or if contributions were not sufficient to cover operations during the year 2002? And what should the Board recommend regarding the appointment of a new Director?

32. In regard to INSTRAW's future, the Director suggested some possible scenarios. One, if INSTRAW were successful in mobilizing sufficient resources for the current year — through expanded government contributions and other fund-raising initiatives — to cover its budgeted expenditures of $1.3 million without requiring the full use of the "supplement" of $800,000 from the United Nations regular budget, then the unused amount of the supplement could be given to it to use as a "reserve" for transition to the year 2002. For the year 2001, all budgeted expenditures of $1.3 million were committed and would be spent, given the current labour-intensive activities of GAINS phases III and IV and the full complement of the GAINS international team of consultants, currently in place at INSTRAW. Any reductions to the current budget would not be possible. Two, if INSTRAW reverted to a "fall back" position in 2002, with a baseline budget of around $500,000-$600,000, to be covered by contributions received during the year — given that government contributions for both 1999 and 2000 were at that level — that would ensure operations during the year 2002, even if no additional resources other than the above were secured. However, if more resources were secured, expenditures could rise above the baseline level, covered by the additional income. The two scenarios would ensure smooth transition to and continuation of at least baseline operations during 2002, while at the same time intensive and systematic fund-raising efforts could bear fruit and eventually move the Institute towards sustainability. A "fall back" position and agreement by the General Assembly that any unspent resources from the $800,000 supplement would be made available for INSTRAW's transition to 2002 would ensure that the Institute would not close at the end of 2001 and would continue to function in 2002.

33. A number of Board members agreed that, short of closing, INSTRAW should consider the "fall back" option. The representative of the host country noted that due consideration would need to be given to the status of INSTRAW's premises and to the international and local staff who might be separated as a result of any retrenching exercise. With regard to the possibility of having to separate staff, one Board member recommended that the separating staff should be fully compensated, as was the case in 1998 and 1999 when the secretariat authorized the payment of compensation to staff members who were separated.

34. Board members hoped that sufficient funds would be raised in 2001 for INSTRAW to cover its own budget. They therefore urged Governments to contribute to the Trust Fund of INSTRAW. Board members also suggested that any unspent funds from the supplement for 2001 be transferred to 2002. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General informed the Board that she had consulted

with the United Nations Controller on that issue and that he had expressed his opinion that the Board could request the Council to recommend to the General Assembly the transfer of unused funds from the supplement. However, some Board members also stated that the Institute needed to ensure a minimum level of contributions from member States of at least $600,000 so that INSTRAW would be able to continue to operate at a minimum level.

35. In view of the need to ensure adequate funds for INSTRAW, some Board members recommended that different fund-raising and cost-sharing arrangements be made, such as engaging an experienced fund-raiser or cost-sharing for joint activities with other United Nations and non-United Nations organizations (such as the Forum for African Women Educationalists) and therefore expand its network of focal points and regional nodes. The Director responded that in the past year INSTRAW had looked for such modalities of cooperation and cost-sharing and expressed her readiness to set up collaboration with other organizations.

36. One Board member raised the issue of the role of the secretariat in supporting INSTRAW's fund-raising efforts and requested the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to outline some concrete suggestions for the way forward for INSTRAW. The Special Representative noted that, given that fund-raising efforts, including those made with UNFIP, had failed and that member States were not convinced of the viability and validity of INSTRAW, the Board needed to consider other options. She mentioned that the Board had not recently reviewed or deliberated fully on options such as the merger of the Institute or of the GAINS project with the United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM), United Nations University (UNU), the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat or elsewhere in the United Nations system.

37. The outgoing President of the Board said that, as a long-standing Board member, she did not recall having participated in or being informed of any proposals to save the GAINS project by transferring it to UNIFEM, UNU or the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. However, she recalled some discussions regarding institutional affiliation with UNU, which did not materialize, and she was aware of the proposal for a merger of INSTRAW with UNIFEM, which did not go forward for several reasons. However, she could not recall any discussion of a merger with the Department. A document presented to the 1999 substantive session of the Council had proposed, inter alia, "closer collaboration" with the Department. She concluded that, in the past, when considering proposals that might affect the institutional framework of INSTRAW, the Board had decided to continue ensuring its autonomy, including reporting procedures. The President of the Board expressed her full agreement with those statements.

IV. Other issues of relevance to the functioning of INSTRAW

38. Under this agenda item, the President of the Board raised a number of important issues. One relates to the announcement made by the Director of INSTRAW of her intention to leave the Institute at the end of July. Board members expressed regret with the decision and recommended that a new Director be appointed as soon as possible. It was also suggested that the new Director should assume her functions prior to the departure of the current Director in order to allow for a smooth transition. With regard to the appointment of a new Director, the

President noted that, as stipulated in the Statute, the Board should be consulted by the Secretary-General on the nomination. Regarding the profile of the new Director, some Board members agreed that the incumbent should have fund-raising and project development skills. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General assured the Board that consultations would take place, as in the past, in accordance with the Board's Statute and requested the Director to ensure that all Board members received a copy of the classified job description which included, inter alia, fund-raising, project and managerial skills, so that they could submit names of suitable candidates by early June to the President.

39. In response to queries regarding the implementation of matters brought to the attention of the Council by the Board at its twentieth session, a staff member noted that most of the matters had been observed — namely, the pending research programmes had been finalized, while all other research activities were deferred; phases I and II of GAINS had been completed; the staff of INSTRAW was sufficiently trained in ICT for the operations of GAINS; an external audit had been conducted on the operations of INSTRAW for the period 1994-1999; the United Nations Controller submits certified financial statements at the end of every biennial period to the Board of Auditors and the General Assembly, in accordance with the financial regulations approved by the General Assembly; and the United Nations Controller had noted that the waiver to programme support payable to the United Nations Secretariat by INSTRAW was not feasible. Regarding the correction of administrative anomalies, the Secretary-General in his report to the General Assembly on the activities of INSTRAW reported that the amounts erroneously charged to INSTRAW had been returned but would be verified by the Board of Auditors.

40. In line with the Board's request made at its nineteenth session, the United Nations Board of Auditors conducted an audit on the operations of INSTRAW for the year 2000 and an evaluation of the Trust Fund for the period 1994-1999. In a communication submitted to the Board of Trustees while in session on 24 May 2001, the Board of Auditors verified the return of the amounts erroneously charged to INSTRAW, except for charges totalling $17,041.60, and recommended that appropriate corrective action be taken with regard to the amount due. In that regard the Special Representative informed the Board that the Controller's office maintained its earlier position that the amount had been repaid. Verification of the transaction by the auditors is awaited. The verification results will be transmitted to the Board by the Special Representative, upon receipt.

41. Regarding the recent audit, several Board members expressed regret that the audit report was not yet available. The President of the Board informed members of her recent communications with the leader of the audit team, requesting that the report be sent for the Board's consideration. She did, however, note that an audit observation memorandum had observed, inter alia, that the question of the financial constraints of INSTRAW remained and that the Board should consider what courses of action should be taken in order to provide INSTRAW with a definite direction with regard to its sustainability.

42. Some Board members expressed concern about the lack of sufficient contributions to INSTRAW from Member States. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General noted that the Director and the secretariat had made incessant appeals to member States to contribute to INSTRAW, including appeals at the

annual United Nations Pledging Conference. Regarding the possibility raised by one Board member of receiving assistance from other United Nations entities, she noted that other entities were also facing financial constraints and therefore the possibility was unlikely to yield sufficient amounts. She nevertheless pointed out that several members of the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality, such as the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNDP, UNIFEM, UNICEF and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), in undertaking joint activities with INSTRAW, had generously contributed funds from their organizations.

43. Given the need to explore alternative sources of funds, Board members agreed on the need to carry out more aggressive fund-raising activities. One Board member appealed to the Board to make personal efforts to get support for GAINS and to get collaborative projects based in their countries and regions that may help to demonstrate the use and importance of GAINS.

44. The President of the Board gave the staff of INSTRAW an opportunity to raise matters of concern:

(a) The Staff Association expressed regret with the announced departure of the Director and noted their gratitude for her generous disposition to respond to INSTRAW's call at a time of need;

(b) The staff thanked the Board of Trustees for their review of INSTRAW's difficult situation and their efforts in trying to arrive at feasible solutions. They expressed special gratitude to those Board Members whose terms would expire in June. The particular efforts of Ms. Esther Ashton during her years as Board member and President were recognized and appreciated;

(c) In regard to the proposal made by some members of the Board regarding a "fall-back" position which INSTRAW could adopt as a retrenchment measure, the staff was pleased with the Board's recommendation that payment of compensation be made to the eligible staff that might need to be separated from the Institute. However, they reiterated their concern that if the fall-back measure was taken, the future of the Institute would be jeopardized;

(d) The staff appreciated the Board's concern over the future of the Institute beyond 2001 and its interest in securing the Institute's long-term sustainability. They expressed confidence that the Board would try to secure the appointment of a new Director as soon as possible. They further noted that, maintaining INSTRAW's operational continuity was essential to ensure that the efforts deployed by INSTRAW during the past two years were not lost. That was of crucial importance since GAINS was under implementation;

(e) The staff expressed concern that some of the discussions of the current session seemed to perceive GAINS as being separate from INSTRAW. They noted that GAINS was conceptualized and developed as the new working methodology of INSTRAW which, besides being a crucial factor in the revitalization of the Institute, was a highly cost-efficient methodology for producing, managing and disseminating gender knowledge and information worldwide. They further noted that the tendency to separate GAINS from INSTRAW and to view it as a separate project might jeopardize the Institute's current means of complying with its research and training mandate.

V. Organization of the session

A. Opening and duration of the session

45. The twenty-first session of the Board of Trustees of INSTRAW was held through the Internet from 22 to 24 May 2001, using a specially designed bulletin board for discussions and deliberations. All of the members of the Board were in their own countries, except for the outgoing and the new Presidents of the Board, who were deliberating from the INSTRAW headquarters in the Dominican Republic. Ex-officio members from the United Nations and ECLAC, on behalf of the regional commissions, were at United Nations Headquarters and in Santiago, Chile.

46. The President of the Board, Ms. Esther Ashton, opened the session. She welcomed all the Board members and extended a special welcome to the new members, Ms. Antigoni Dimitriadi (Greece); Ms. Boutheina Gribaa (Tunisia); Ms. Tehmina Hussain (Bangladesh); Ms. Pauline Sukhai (Guyana) and Ms. Norica Nicolai (re-elected Romania), and the ex officio members of the Board. Ms. Tehmina Hussain (Bangladesh) and Ms. Mamosebi Pholo (Lesotho) did not attend.

47. In her opening remarks, the President of the Board commended the work of the Director for the efforts made during the 2000 session of the General Assembly which had resulted in the resolution that provided the Institute with a supplement from the regular budget of the United Nations in order to ensure its operations during the year 2001.

48. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General to INSTRAW, in her opening remarks, welcomed participants and conveyed the wishes of the Secretary-General for a successful Board meeting. She expressed appreciation to the Director of INSTRAW and its staff for all the work accomplished during the past years and to the host country for its consistent and unreserved political support to the Institute's revitalization.

49. She then updated the members of the Board on the major gender issues and priorities emerging from the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (Beijing+5), the Millennium Summit, the Millennium Assembly and the Commission on the Status of Women. She pointed to the outcome document of Beijing+5, (A/S-23/10/Rev.1) which singled out INSTRAW and its new working methodology GAINS as one of the means of collaborative research, training and information dissemination using ICTs. She also outlined the many efforts made by the United Nations to secure funding for the Institute, including the subvention of $800,000 from the regular budget for the year 2001.

50. However, the Special Representative noted that, despite great efforts in implementing GAINS, INSTRAW was still facing great financial insecurity. Hence, she called upon the members of the Board to face the challenge of ensuring adequate funds for INSTRAW to take it beyond December 2001. She expressed her readiness as well as that of her Office, the members of the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality and the Division for the Advancement of Women to support and co-sponsor activities with INSTRAW.

51. On behalf of the host country, the Secretary of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic, Mr. Hugo Tolentino Dipp, welcomed the

participants to the Board session and expressed hope that the meeting would mark a new phase in the development of GAINS, namely a phase of its final consolidation and expansion. The Secretary of State expressed the confidence and the conviction of the host country that the Institute would once again overcome its financial uncertainties and continue its work for the benefit of women worldwide.

52. The Secretary of State of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, Yadira Henríquez de Sánchez Baret, in her welcoming statement expressed her belief that the Board session would contribute to the institutional strengthening and further consolidation of INSTRAW. She noted that her Ministry was willing to undertake all necessary steps with her Government in order to ensure the host country's support to the continuous work of the Institute in the area of research and training for the advancement of women. She further expressed her hope that other Governments would also contribute, in order to enable INSTRAW to implement its mandate through the use of ICTs. She further noted that the current session of the Board illustrated how ICTs and the Institute's new working methodology could help efforts for the advancement of women.

53. The Director of INSTRAW, Ms. Eleni Stamiris, welcomed all participants to INSTRAW's twenty-first session of the Board of Trustees, noting that the meeting was taking place "virtually" for the first time, in the first year of the twenty-first century. She noted the financial difficulties encountered by INSTRAW during the past year and the efforts made to save the Institute from closing.

54. The Director then presented the larger picture of INSTRAW, pointing to its five-year plan for revitalization, achievements and challenges. She noted that 1999 had been the year in which a new ICT-driven research and training mandate had been given to INSTRAW, while the years 2000 and 2001 were years of institution-building, a transition period of restructuring and implementing GAINS. She explained that 2002 and 2003 were years that should bring about INSTRAW's sustainability and the full functionality of GAINS. The Director further elaborated on different aspects and phases of the Institute's restructuring, in particular the implementation of GAINS, such as: the launch of the GAINS prototype at Beijing+5 and the Council sessions in 2000; the expansion of GAINS functionality by the development of its networks, installation of adequate technical infrastructure and development of research and training methodologies to be piloted. She noted the achievements of INSTRAW, emphasizing the completion of phases I and II of GAINS, the preparation of a portfolio of special projects to be funded separately, the development of publicity and fund-raising strategies and the design of online research and training methodologies, stating that by building on those achievements, the full functionality and long-term sustainability of GAINS could be realized.

55. While noting those achievements, the Director explained that they laid the foundation for a renewed INSTRAW with an agenda that would successfully respond to the new and changing needs and gaps. The Director emphasized, however, that there was need for a stable and diversified financial base for INSTRAW which could not be achieved unless the Institute was provided with adequate "reserves" to take it safely into 2002. She also informed the members of the Board of her decision to leave the Institute at the end of July, after reporting to the 2001 substantive session of the Council.

B. Attendance

56. The following members of the Board attended the session: Ms. Esther Ashton (Bolivia), Ms. Ana Maria Braga da Cruz (Portugal), Ms. Antigoni Dimitriadi (Greece), Ms. Boutheina Gribaa (Tunisia), Ms. Hanan El-Malki (Syrian Arab Republic), Ms. Jane Mulemwa (Uganda), Ms. Pauline Sukhai (Guyana) and Ms. Cecilia Valcárcel (Spain). Ms. Norica Nicolai (Romania) was unable to attend and sent comments to the secretariat by email.

57. The following ex officio members of the Board also attended: the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to INSTRAW, Ms. Angela King, Assistant-Secretary-General, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women; the representative of ECLAC, Ms. Sonia Montano, representing all the regional commissions; Ms. Yadira Henríquez de Sánchez Baret, the representative of the Dominican Republic, the host country; and Ms. Eleni Stamiris, Director of INSTRAW.

C. Election of officers

58. In accordance with rule 7 of its rules of procedure, the Board elected the following officers by acclamation:

President:
Ana Maria Braga da Cruz (Portugal)

Vice-President:
Jane Mulemwa (Uganda)

Rapporteur:
Antigoni Dimitriadi (Greece)

59. The newly elected President thanked the members of the Board for her election and congratulated the Institute for arranging for the "virtual" meeting, which promised to be a good channel of communication for Board members in the future.

D. Agenda

60. The Board adopted the following agenda (INSTRAW/BT/2001/R.1) by consensus:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Adoption of the agenda.
3. Election of officers.
4. Progress report on the activities of INSTRAW for 2000.
5. INSTRAW's proposed strategic focus, work plan and budgetary requirements, 2001.
6. Other issues of relevance to the functioning of INSTRAW.

7. Adoption of the report.

8. Date and venue of next session.

9. Closure of the twenty-first session of the Board of Trustees.

61. The President of the Board then opened agenda items 4, 5 and 6 and asked the members of the Board for their deliberations.

E. Adoption of the report of the Board on its twenty-first session

62. The Board adopted the report on its twenty-first session (INSTRAW/BT/R.4), together with matters to be brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council.

63. Prior to the closure of the twenty-first session, the Board decided to hold its twenty-second session in February 2002 at its headquarters in Santo Domingo. The exact date would be determined at a later date.